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# FEMA Foreword

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is pleased to present the second edition of the widely used *Rapid Visual Screening of Buildings for Potential Seismic Hazards: A Handbook*, and its companion, *Supporting Documentation*. The policy of improving reports and manuals that deal with the seismic safety of existing buildings as soon as new information and adequate resources are available is thus being reaffirmed. Users should take note of some major differences between the two editions of the *Handbook*. The technical content of the new edition is based more on experiential data and less on expert judgment than was the case in the earlier edition, as is explained in the *Supporting Documentation*. From the presentational point of view, the *Handbook* retains much of the material of the earlier edition, but the material has been rather thoroughly rearranged to further facilitate the step-by-step process of conducting the rapid visual screening of a building. By far the most significant difference between the two editions,

however, is the need for a higher level of engineering understanding and expertise on the part of the users of the second edition. This shift has been caused primarily by the difficulty experienced by users of the first edition in identifying the lateral-force-resisting system of a building without entry—a critical decision of the rapid visual screening process. The contents of the *Supporting Documentation* volume have also been enriched to reflect the technical advances in the *Handbook*.

FEMA and the Project Officer wish to express their gratitude to the members of the Project Advisory Panel, to the technical and workshop consultants, to the project management, and to the report production and editing staff for their expertise and dedication in the upgrading of these two volumes.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency